



# Friends of Smithills Hall

Patron: The Duke of Norfolk President: Sir William Goring Bt.  
Smithills Hall\*Smithills Dean Road\* Bolton\*Lancashire\*BL1 7NP  
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[www.friendsofsmithillshall.co.uk](http://www.friendsofsmithillshall.co.uk)



## FRIENDS BULLETIN No. 40 *Spring / Summer 2020*

**Friends of Smithills Hall Executive Committee**

**Chairman:** David Williams, **Vice Chairman:** Joan Sheppard, **Secretary:** Sue Priest, **Treasurer:** Wendy Edwards, **Members:** Ruth Ellison, Dorothy Lee, Elaine Fletcher-Cowen, Margaret Koppens

*"All through the long winter, I dream of my garden. On the first day of spring, I dig my fingers deep into the soft earth. I can feel its energy, and my spirits soar."  
~Helen Hayes*

### **Introduction**

Welcome to the Spring/Summer edition of the Bulletin. The Spring Bulletin was not sent as 'lockdown' meant the Friends had no access to the Hall to be able produce send it to you. This edition therefore incorporates both Spring and Summer.

### **Hall closure**

As a result of the coronavirus and the imposition of a 'lockdown' it was, of course, inevitable that the Hall would be closed.

As a result the Friends have lost the use of their office on the first floor of the Hall and all that entailed. Like most others we have done what we can from home whilst watching lockdown time pass by and events being cancelled or postponed.

I am sure you will join with me in passing on our best wishes to anyone who was affected by, or continues to be affected by the pandemic, which altered many of our lives considerably.

*Working in partnership with Bolton Council*

Many of our gardens have never had such close attention nor looked so tidy. Regretfully we have been unable to help maintain the Hall gardens during this period and await Council approval to restart the maintenance work.

Included in this edition are:-

- The Sheriff
- Christine Collins
- Future events
- Sir William Goring
- Dates for your diary
- The AGM

### *The Sheriff*



Richard Henry Ainsworth

The origins of the office of sheriff date back to Saxon times. When the Saxons divided the realm into provinces (called in Anglo Saxon 'shires') they installed certain of their chief men to preside over them known as 'shyre reeve'. They were responsible to the King for the maintenance of law and order within the shire or county, and for the collection and return of taxes due to the Crown.

The separation of the ecclesiastical from the secular courts under William I (the Conqueror) left the sheriff supreme in the county and as president of its court. He convened and led military forces of the shire, executed all writs, and, for the first century of the Conquest judged both

criminal and civil cases. From the time of Henry II (who reigned 1154 – 89) however his jurisdiction was severely restricted as a result of the growing jurisdiction of the curia regis ("king's court"). His duty thereafter was to investigate allegations of crime from within his shire, to conduct a preliminary examination of the accused, to try lesser offences, and to detain those accused of major crimes for the itinerant justices.

The new offices of coroner (first mentioned in 1194), of local constable (first mentioned in 1242), and of justices of the peace (first known in the 12<sup>th</sup> century as *custodies pacis*, "keepers of the peace") all took work and duties away from the sheriffs. After the Tudor reorganisation of local government in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the office was largely ceremonial. English law was consolidated in the Sheriffs Act of 1877, however, under which sheriffs in all parts of England were assigned a unified set of duties.

At the Court at Windsor  
the 27<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1882

Present

The Queen's Most Excellent Majesty

In Council

To Richard Henry Ainsworth, of  
Winwick Warren, Rugby, Esq<sup>re</sup>

Whereas Her Majesty was this day pleased by and with the advice of Her Privy Council to nominate and appoint you for and to be Sheriff of the County of Northampton during Her Majesty's Pleasure. These are therefore to require you to take the Custody and Charge of the said County, and duly to perform the duties of Sheriff thereof during Her Majesty's Pleasure, and whereof you are duly to answer according to Laws

Dated this 27<sup>th</sup> day of February 1882

As Winwick Warren, Northamptonshire, was predominantly the winter residence of the Ainsworths, where the weather tended to be warmer, and in later years owing to the delicacy of Mrs Ainsworth's health, visits to Smithills Hall became very



Winwick Warren, Northamptonshire

Infrequent. Winwick Warren was considered to be the Ainsworth's main residence. As a result Richard Henry Ainsworth, on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1882, was appointed Sheriff for the County (see written note on the previous page)

Today there are 55 High Sheriffs serving the counties of England and Wales each year. They are appointed by the king or queen at their pleasure and acting as a senior executive officer in an English County or smaller area perform a variety of administrative and judicial functions. Sheriffs now attend at election petitions and are responsible for the execution of writs; they are liable for the custody of prisoners, and they act as returning officer at parliamentary elections.

### *Historic Halls Manager*



It is with great sadness that we have said goodbye to Historic Halls Manager Christine Collins who took voluntary redundancy at the end of March 2020.

Christine was Manager at Smithills Hall from April 2012 when she replaced retiring manager Janette Rix.

Christine, who was a regular attender at Friends' Committee meetings, was presented with a card and a pot of plants at the 5<sup>th</sup> March meeting.

The Libraries and Museum Service had been required to find savings and had done some staff reorganisation which included downgrading Christine's post. After careful deliberation she chose to take voluntary redundancy.

Christine was always pleasant, helpful and informative, and kept us up to date with developments concerning the Hall, that concerned us as Friends, and she will be greatly missed. We wish her a happy and prosperous retirement and hope to see her from time to time.

Catherine Chappell has now been appointed fulltime Halls Manager and we hope our partnership will be as helpful and effective as the one we had with Christine. Catherine is no stranger having worked at the Hall in a part-time capacity.

### *Future Events*

The Annual General Meeting and the Garden Party were both cancelled. The

<sup>1</sup> Copy of handwritten order in Friends Archive

Charity Commission were consulted prior to the AGM cancellation

### **Memorial Wreathlaying**

The annual Wreathlaying on the Chapel 1914-18 Memorial will be from 10.45am on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

### **Christmas Social – 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

The Speaker will be Stuart Elliott who will talk about “English Village Life in the Middle Ages”.

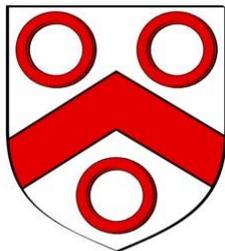
### **Christmas Carol Service**

The Friends’ Carol Service will be held in the Hall Chapel on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 commencing 7pm.

Further details about these will be sent to members nearer the event.

### *Happy Birthday Sir William*

May we wish a very Happy Birthday to our President, Sir William Goring, who was 87



on 21<sup>st</sup> June. Our best wishes also go to his wife Stephanie.

For new members here is some background about Sir William.

Sir William has been our President now for about fifteen years. We are always delighted when he and Stephanie are able to make the long journey north to Smithills Hall, and many members will know him from personal acquaintance.

Sir William Burton Nigel Goring was born in 1933 in Kent and is a Baronetcy whose Arms consist of ‘Argent a chevron between three annulets Gules’<sup>2</sup> This Baronet is described as 18<sup>th</sup> May 1678 with a precedence of 23 July 1637.

Sir William<sup>3</sup> is the son of Freda Margaret, who was the sister of our late President John Francis Ainsworth. Sir William’s father

<sup>2</sup> 107<sup>th</sup> Burke’s Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage.

was Major Frederick Yelverton Goring (1893-1938) who spent much of his army life in the Royal Sussex Regiment.

### *Annual General Meeting*

For the first time in the history of The Friends of Smithills Hall the AGM was held via video conferencing (Zoom) on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July, when six members were in ‘attendance’. The normal AGM agenda was followed. Because of the restrictions caused by Covid-19 it has not been possible yet to produce audited accounts (which will be sent to members when done).

There has been one change to the Committee. Because of health concerns Ann Marie Elliott-Clark did not stand for re-election. All existing members were reappointed.

### **Ann Marie Elliott-Clark**



Ann has been a stalwart of the Committee for many years guiding, gardening, leading volunteers decorating the Hall for Christmas, and with craft activities. Ann is a life member and will stay in touch. She says “I just want to thank everyone at Smithills for their help, support, and friendship over the years that I have been a volunteer.” We will miss her support but wish her good health and hope she can return in due course.

<sup>3</sup> Baronet’s Roll under Goring of Highden



